

# Smoke alarms save lives!



***When fire strikes you may have less than one minute to safely get out of the building.***

- Having working smoke alarms in your home can double your chances of survival if a fire occurs.
- Home fire deaths have been cut in half since the early 1970's when smoke alarms were first marketed.
- 50% of the fire deaths that occur each year in the U.S. take place in the 5% of homes without smoke alarms.

***Fires produce heat, smoke and toxic gases.***

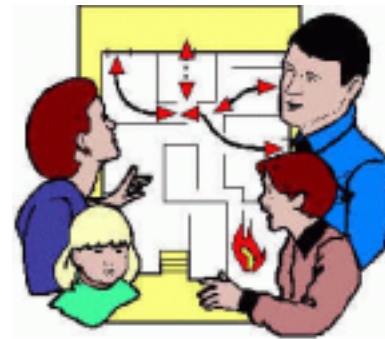
Smoke alarms warn residents in the event of a fire. They give you time to leave the building before your escape route is blocked by deadly smoke, heat and toxic gases.

***Special smoke alarms are available for the hearing impaired.***

The alarm can be wired to a light, which flashes when the detector is in alarm. A vibrating alert unit can also be used under a pillow while the person is asleep.

***Plan and practice a home fire escape route.***

- Have two ways out of every room.
- Discuss the plan so each member of the family understands what to do in case of emergency.
- Choose a place outside the home where family members can meet to be sure everyone is safely out of the building.



(over)



## *FireFACTORS*

**Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Department of Fire Services**

P.O. Box 1025 State Road • Stow, Massachusetts 01775 • (978) 567-3300 • [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)

***Practice, practice, practice...  
Conduct drills frequently so actions  
become automatic behaviors.***

- Hold a family fire drill during the day, while everyone is awake and another one at night while children are asleep to see how they respond.
- Following the drill, make adjustments to the plan.
- Does someone in the family, who may be too young or physically impaired, need assistance?
- An adult can go to their room and help that person to an alternate escape route.
- If a child sleeps through the alarm they may need to be awakened by an adult.
- Consider purchasing a folding escape ladder as a secondary means of exit from upper floors.

***When the alarm sounds:***

- Leave the building.
- ***Get out, Stay out!***
- Go to the family meeting place.
- Dial 9-1-1 from a neighbor's home.

***All homes need fire protection***

MGL c.148 s.26F requires that all homes sold or transferred in Massachusetts have working smoke alarms. All newly built homes are required to have smoke alarms.

Some homes, owned by the same family for many years, may not yet have smoke alarms. Contact your local fire department and ask about smoke alarm installation programs.

***General guidelines for smoke alarm placement:***

- On every level of your home.
- In hallways outside the bedroom.
- At the top of open stairways.
- At the base of cellar stairs.
- Inside the bedroom for sound sleepers or smokers.

Contact your local fire department for exact locations.

***Maintenance***

- Once a month vacuum or blow out dust from the alarms.
- Push the test button.
- Change batteries at least once a year. An easy way to remember is to change the batteries when you change your clocks. A "chirping" sound indicates that it's time to change the batteries.
- Don't paint smoke alarms!



***10-Year Lifespan***

If your smoke alarms are 10 years old or more it's time to replace them with new ones. There's a label on the alarm with the date of manufacture. If it doesn't have a label, it's already more than ten years old. If you don't know how old they are it's best to install new ones.